

EPA

Mentor Protégé Program

Office of Small and Disadvantaged
Business Utilization (1230C)

Announcement

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has established the Mentor-Protégé Program to stimulate the participation of small disadvantaged businesses (SDBs) in Agency contracts. Prime contractors accepted into the Program as Mentors will provide technical and managerial support to Protégé subcontractors (SDBs). Protégé firms may only be SDBs. The support is not limited to subcontract activities under an Agency prime contract, but may cover all aspects of the Protégé firm's operations.

PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established the Mentor-Protégé Program in order to stimulate and positively impact the number of small disadvantaged businesses (SDBs) involved in EPA contracts. The purpose of the Program is to:

- C Increase the participation of SDBs in EPA procurement activities as subcontractors, team members, suppliers and ultimately as prime contractors;
- C Establish a mutually beneficial relationship between SDBs and EPA's large business prime contractors and small businesses wishing to serve as Mentors;
- C Aid in the achievement of goals for the use of SDBs in subcontracting activities under EPA contracts;
- C Promote the economic stability of SDBs; and
- C Develop the technical and corporate administrative expertise of SDBs which will ultimately lead to greater success in competition for contract opportunities.

MENTORS

Under the Mentor-Protégé program, EPA prime contractors serve as Mentors. Mentor firms share

their expertise with SDBs, or Proteges, in the following developmental areas:

- C General business management, including organizational and personnel management, marketing, business development and overall business planning;
- C Engineering and technical matters such as production, inventory control, quality assurance; and
- C Any other assistance designed to foster and enhance the capabilities of the Protégé firm under the developmental program.

Mentor firms, while receiving no financial incentive for participating, are permitted to award non-competitive contracts up to \$1,000,000 to Protégé firms, thus reducing the Mentor's administrative burden.

Contracting Officers may include participation in the Agency's Mentor-Protégé Program in technical evaluation criteria, except for small business set-asides and 8(a) requirements. A separate criterion may be established or Program participation may be included as part of a criterion evaluating an offeror's plan to provide subcontracting opportunities to SDBs.

Separate award fee criteria shall not be established on the Mentor-Protégé Program. Rather, Mentor-Protégé Program participation shall only be considered when a criterion on the small business and small and disadvantaged business subcontracting plan has been included in the award fee plan. Contractors shall be advised in the award fee plan that successful participation in the EPA Mentor-Protégé Program may improve their evaluation under this criterion. The Contracting Officer should consult with the Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization (OSDBU) or the Small Business Specialist prior to including this criterion in the award fee plan. Contracting Officers, wishing to further stress the importance of the subcontracting plan., may establish a separate award fee pool for the subcontracting plan criterion.

PROTEGES

Protégé firms must be small disadvantaged businesses. Small disadvantaged businesses are defined as business concerns which are:

- C at least 51 percent owned by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals; or
- C in the case of a publicly traded company, a business concern in which at least 51 percent of the stock is owned by one or more socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. Individuals shall be presumed to be socially disadvantaged if they are members of the following groups: Black Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans (including American Indians), Asian Americans, Eskimos, Aleuts, Hawaiians or women owning small businesses.

Mentor firms are responsible for the selection of Protégé firms and must submit the names of potential Proteges to EPA for approval. OSDBU and Small Business Specialists will also assist Mentor firms identifying eligible Protégé firms.

APPLICATIONS PROCESS

Offerors interested in participating in the Program must submit an application in accordance with EPA Provision 52.219-130 along with the submission of their initial proposal to the Contracting Officer. A copy of the application must also go to OSDBU at Headquarters or the Small Business Specialist in the Contracts Management Division at Cincinnati, Ohio or at Research Triangle Park, North Carolina.

As part of the application, the offeror must submit a letter of intent which indicates that both the offeror (Mentor) and the SDB (Protégé) intend to enter into a contractual relationship under which the Protégé is to perform as a subcontractor under the contract resulting from the solicitation. The letter of intent must also state that the firms will negotiate a Mentor-Protégé agreement. An offeror is permitted to identify more than one SDB in the application.

Participating prime contractors are not limited to making application to the Program only during the pre-award phase. Prime contractors may also apply for and participate in the program at any time during contract performance.

After an application has been submitted, OSDBU or the Small Business Specialist evaluate the application against the criteria set forth in the EP Provision. Within twenty (20) calendar days OSDBU or the Small Business Specialist will advise the Contracting Officer whether the application should be approved or rejected. The Contracting Officer may identify to such offerors deficiencies in their applications or request additional information with offerors' revised or best and final offers.

Separate from the evaluation of the application, and consistent with a solicitation's evaluation scheme, the SDB will be evaluated as part of the overall evaluation of the offeror's technical and business proposals. If the SDB is found to be technical unacceptable or deficient as a proposed subcontractor, the Contracting Officer shall inform

the offeror during the discussion phase that no further action will be taken on the offeror's application.

Upon approval of application, the Mentor firm must submit an executed Mentor-Protégé agreement to the Contracting Officer, with a copy to OSDBU or the Small Business Specialist, within thirty (30) calendar days from the effective date of the contract. OSDBU or the Small Business Specialist will advise the Contracting Officer within fifteen (15) calendar days whether the agreement should be accepted or rejected.

The Contracting Officer must notify the contractor if the agreement is not accepted within thirty (3) calendar days from its submission.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

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